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## THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST PART OF ISAIAH.

IN July and October, 1891, I ventured to discuss in the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW some neglected problems of the prophecies of Isaiah xl.—xlvi. Those articles were intended both to supplement and to correct the views which I had already expressed ten years previously. In continuation, I wish now to state the results to which I have been led in completing the revision of my critical results (now in their third stage) on the dates of the prophecies of Isaiah i.—xxxix. Discussion must, I fear, be reserved for a work in which I hope to deal with what are sometimes called Introduction-questions relative to the Book of Isaiah. No one can be more conscious than I am myself of the difficulty of these questions. At one time I thought it possible to give a chronological re-arrangement of the prophecies of this Book; I should now find it very difficult to do so except for beginners. For them, I confess that I agree with Prof. Siegfried, of Jena, in thinking the plan of re-arrangement very decidedly the best. But if it be desired to represent typographically for advanced students the present state of critical research, I think that such a plan as Kautsch and Socin have adopted in their German edition of Genesis<sup>1</sup> is a far more feasible one. I am not very hopeful of persuading many people to adopt my results; English scholars do not for the most part agree with me that "complication, and not simplicity, is the note of the questions and of the answers which constitute

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<sup>1</sup> The principle of this edition is also adopted by Mr. Bacon in his *Genesis of Genesis* (Hartford, U.S.A., 1892); and, with modifications, by Mr. Fripp in his just published work, *The Composition of the Book of Genesis* (London, 1892).

Old Testament criticism"<sup>2</sup> in our day. Nor am I in the least disposed to claim finality for them. There are evidently great critical problems, but as yet they have not been examined with adequate thoroughness by a sufficient number of independent scholars. I have endeavoured to collect the evidence and at considerable length to discuss the possible solutions, and I have been able to profit by the sometimes fragmentary but often very suggestive writings of students like Kuenen, Stade, Guthe, Giesebrecht, Dillmann, Cornill, Francis Brown. But I am sensible that in the manipulation of such delicate evidence I must often have fallen into errors which may sometimes (not always) affect the soundness of my results.

To begin by theorising as to the manner in which the original Book of Isaiah (chaps. i.—xxxix.) arose, would obviously be absurd. A mere glance at the collection reveals the fact that it contains heterogeneous elements. Our first object must therefore be to separate the Isaianic from the non-Isaianic passages, or from those of mixed origin; and our next to determine as far as possible the period to which each of them belongs. In short, we must institute a very careful and deliberate analysis, not only of each of the larger parts into which at first sight Isaiah I. appears to fall (viz. *a.* chaps. i.—xii.; *b.* chaps. xiii.—xxvii.; *c.* chaps. xxviii.—xxxiii.; *d.* chaps. xxxiv., xxxv., and *e.* chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix.), but of each separate prophetic composition. And in our analysis we must bear constantly in mind the great dangers to which the pre-Exilic texts have been exposed, and the probability that, in the words of Prof. Francis Brown, they "owe much more to compilers and editors than has often been supposed."<sup>3</sup> I now venture to put forward my present critical conclusions as to the origin of the several prophecies in their present form, reserving the arguments which support them for the book which I hope to publish next year.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, by the present writer, vol. ii., p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of Soc. of Biblical Lit.*, 1890, p. 105.

Chap. i. Verses 5—27 reproduce passages from prophecies delivered during Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (but before the siege of Jerusalem), preceded by a specially written introduction (*vv.* 1—4). Verses 29—31 are an Isaianic fragment, for which the editor desired to find a home, and which he therefore linked to *vv.* 1—27 by an artificial verse (*v.* 28) of his own composition. It is possible that the Messianic prophecy in *ii.* 2—4 (=Micah *iv.* 1—3) once stood after *i.* 29—31, perhaps with the addition of the now omitted verse, Mic. *iv.* 4. If chap. i. has been rightly dated, it has no special connection with chaps. *ii.*—*xii.*, but must have stood as a prologue to a larger collection which included prophecies of the period of Sennacherib.

Chaps. *ii.*—*iv.* There have been many theories as to the opening verses, which contrast so strongly with the sequel. My own theory is that *vv.* 2—4 were inserted from the Book of Micah (see Mic. *iv.* 1—3) by an editor, who, in place of Mic. *iv.* 4, has given us a shorter practical exhortation of his own (*ii.* 5). It is probable that *ii.* 2—5 exactly fills the place of a passage of Isaiah, which in the editor's time had become illegible. (This theory may be combined with one on which I do not lay quite so much stress relative to another change of position which this favourite passage may have experienced; see above.) It should be added that the original prophecy in Mic. *iv.* 1—4 is probably itself the work of an editor (or rather, of one of the editors) of the prophecies of Micah in the Persian period, when the activity of the Sopherim (*Prophecies of Isaiah*, *ii.* 228—231) was at its height. The Isaianic portion of the prophecy may be safely assigned to the reign of Ahaz; it was written before B.C. 734 (first captivity of Israel; first payment of tribute to Assyria by Judah). Non-Isaianic portions: *ii.* 22; *iii.* 6, 7; *iii.* 10, 11; *iv.* 1; *iv.* 5, 6. *iv.* 2 should stand after *vv.* 3 and 4 as the close of Isaiah's prophecy.

Chap. *v.* 1—24. Nearly contemporaneous with the pre-

ceding prophecy. Verses 8—24, together with x. 1—4a, form an independent discourse consisting of six sections, each of which opens with a "Woe."—Chap. v. 25—30. Verse 25 is an editorial insertion, composed at a time when v. 24 was immediately followed by the great retrospective oracle, ix. 7—20, to which v. 26—30 forms the conclusion. This hypothesis, which is that of Giesebrecht and Cornill, is a development of that of Ewald, adopted in 1870 by myself, and seems to me the only one which accounts for all the phenomena.—Chap. vi. Evidently the prologue to the prophecies which follow. It describes the vision and call of the young Isaiah, and the prophetic message entrusted to him. Written not earlier than the retirement of the allied kings, Rezin and Pekah. The troubles caused by the latter were the prelude of those sore judgments announced in *vv.* 11—13 (cf. vii. 17—25); hence the editor places directly after chap. vi. the description of the abortive Syro-Ephraimitish attempt upon Jerusalem.—Chaps. vii.—ix. 6 (7). I have already expressed the opinion that this obviously composite work belongs to different periods and writers, "the whole section [having] only assumed its present form long after the original utterance of the prophecies" (*P. I.*, i. 42). This theory I still hold, but as I hope in a more critically accurate form.—Chap. vii., which relates to the Syro Ephraimitish invasion, is based upon accurate records of Isaiah's utterances, though a few glosses have made their way into the text, and in *vv.* 21—25 it is more than probable that mutilated and sometimes partly illegible fragments of Isaiah have been worked up by a later editor. Verses 18 and 19 moreover, though genuine, seem to belong to a different period.—In chap. viii. (written soon after the preceding prophecies) there is good evidence (see *vv.* 9, 10) that the prophecy was modified by Isaiah himself subsequently to its first composition. And at *v.* 21 the historical situation all at once becomes entirely different. It is a new prophecy which meets us here, and the opening of the description is evidently incomplete.

The editor could not help interposing to make the fragments which he had intelligible. This latter part of the section is clearly subsequent to the Assyrian annexation of the N. and N.E. districts of Israel.—Chap. ix. 7 (8)—20 (21), with v. 26—30: Date, the beginning of the reign of Ahaz.—Chap. x. 1—4; see above.—Chap. x. 5—xii. This great composite work falls into four parts, viz., *a.* x. 5—34; *b.* xi. 1—9; *c.* xi. 10—16; *d.* ch. xii. The greater part of *a.* belongs to the time immediately preceding the siege of Ashdod in 711, but *vv.* 22 and 23 are a later insertion, belonging to the period of Hezekiah's rebellion against Sennacherib, while *vv.* 28—34 are probably a fragment of an earlier prophecy, delivered during the siege of Samaria, and xi. 1—9 (*b.*) is properly an independent work belonging to the reign of Ahaz, but presumably (on account of the progress in its view of the Messiah) not as early as the prophecy of the Prince of Peace (viii. 22—ix. 6). To this prophecy of the Messiah, the remainder of chap. xi. forms an appendix; it is undoubtedly post-Exilic, as well as the two liturgical songs in chap. xii., which in the *Prophecies of Isaiah*, ii. 187, note 2, and in the *Encycl. Britannica* (art. "Isaiah"), I already admitted might plausibly be viewed as late compositions.

We now come to the second of our more obvious divisions, chaps. xiii.—xxvii. The first prophecy in the collection is beyond question of late Exilic origin. The only possible doubt is, whether the ode in xiv. 4 *b.*—21 may not be the work of a different hand from xiii. 2—xiv. 2.—Chap. xiv. 24—27: originally the epilogue to x. 5—27 (or 34).—Chap. xiv. 28—32: Date B.C. 705.—Chaps. xv., xvi. While still regarding xv. 1—xvi. 12 as substantially a pre-Isaianic oracle (a result of high literary importance), I now incline to hold a more complicated theory with regard to the epilogue. I think that the certainly Isaianic portion of the epilogue begins at the words, "Within three years," and that the remainder of it is due to a late editor, who wrote as far as possible in the style of Isaiah. It was not

Isaiah, I think, who sought to rescue the "oracle on Moab" from oblivion, but the editor. Finding a prophecy of Isaiah upon Moab, the greater part of which had become illegible, he substituted for the illegible portion a pathetic anonymous elegy on the destruction of the same people, retouching it here and there in a somewhat Isaianic style, and prefixing some connecting words to the Isaianic fragment at the end. (This theory is in harmony with my conclusions in some similar cases.)—Chap. xvii. 1—11: Date, just before the Syro-Ephraimitish invasion. Verses 7 and 8 were inserted later by the prophet himself; after his time (as Stade has well shown) some explanatory paraphrastic words were introduced by mistake.—Chap. xvii. 12—14, written when Isaiah was anticipating an invasion of Judah by Sargon (cf. on x. 28—34).—Chap. xviii.: Written on the occasion of an embassy from Tirhakah to Hezekiah, about B.C. 703.—Chap. xix., verses 1—4, and 11—17, are Isaianic; their date nearly synchronises with that of chap. xviii. Verses 5—10 are probably a post-Exilic insertion; they may perhaps fill the place of a genuine Isaianic passage which had become illegible. The epilogue (vv. 18—25) can hardly, as a whole, be earlier than the time of that wise and beneficent ruler of Egypt—the first Ptolemy. This view I have already expressed elsewhere (*The Origin of the Psalter*, p. 184); it is, of course, widely different from that of Hitzig, which makes verses 16—25 an interpolation from the hand of Onias. I am sorry that it should have displeased one of my most respected critics (Professor Whitehouse, in *Critical Review*, Jan. 1892). I cannot, however, admit that "all canons of literary criticism are flung to the winds," nor am I satisfied with the argument for Isaiah's authorship offered by the critic. Kuenen, it is true, is in favour of the conservative theory, but it is evident that the scale inclines but slightly toward Isaiah, and that he would willingly have re-examined the question. The reader will notice, however, that I have been speaking of the epilogue *as a whole*. If any one should think it safer

to assign verses 18—22 to the age of Xerxes, leaving only verses 23—25 for the early Greek period, I have no objection; or if some one can make me understand how the whole of the epilogue can have arisen in the Persian period (which appears to be the view of Dr. Oort, of Leyden), I am very willing to be persuaded.—Chap. xx. obviously belongs to the time of the siege of Ashdod, B.C. 711.

At this point another Babylonian prophecy comes in. Chap. xxi. 1—10, it is now quite certain, belongs to the close of the Exile; "Elam," in verse 2="Anzan," of which Cyrus was king before his conquest of Media. On my change of view on this subject I have lately said enough in the *Expositor*, March, 1892, p. 214.—Chap. xxi. 11, 12 and 13—17. Verses 15 to 17 are, I fully admit, a small fragment of a prophecy of Isaiah. But they were, I think, attached, after the return from Babylon, to two small oracles of unknown authorship (verses 11, 12 and 13—17).—Chap. xxii. 1—14, written on the occasion of the raising of the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian general.—Chap. xxii. 15—25, written during Sennacherib's invasion, but before the siege (cf. Isa. i. 23, 24).—Chap. xxiii.: Is this chapter a whole, and is it all the work of the same writer? A negative answer must be returned; verses 15—18 are certainly an appendix, and since they have no points of contact of any kind with the preceding ode, and end in most unpoetic bathos, we may safely deny them to the author of the ode. Next, when was the appendix added? There are weighty arguments for assigning the date to the restoration period. A harder problem remains—Was the ode itself written by the prophet Isaiah? It is complicated with the minor question—Does verse 13, in its present form, come from the same hand as the rest of the poem? I agree with Dillmann, that though verse 13 probably contains a certain Isaianic element, in its present form it is late, and is probably due to the author of the appendix (who had in his mind Nebuchadrezzar's supposed conquest of Tyre). The occasion of Isaiah's ode was probably one or both of the two attempts



on Tyre made by Shalmaneser IV.—Chaps. xxiv.—xxvii. No doubt post-Exilic. Vatke is, I think, right in connecting this strange but fascinating work with the times of Artaxerxes Ochus, though he is wrong in identifying the “city of desolation” with Sidon, so ruthlessly treated by the Persian conqueror in 351. The critical problems of this long prophecy (or reflexion of prophecy) are singularly complicated.

The third part contains chaps. xxviii.—xxxiii. Chap. xxviii., which, in spite of some contrary indications, must be isolated from the rest, has received much fresh light through the researches of Giesebrecht. Verses 1—6 and verses 23—29 represent Isaiah’s hopeful anticipations for the collective people of Judah during the siege of Samaria; verses 7—22 embody the sterner and more severe views formed under the influence of a great disappointment, viz., Hezekiah’s rejection of the wholesome policy of Isaiah, and his rebellion against Assyria. The same date will answer for chaps. xxix.—xxxi., which reproduce prophecies delivered at various times between B.C. 704 and 701.—Chap. xxxii. 1—8 and verses 9—20 are appendices to these prophecies. A somewhat elaborate study of these sections has led me to the conclusion that they are both post-Exilic. It would be impossible to abridge my arguments; I hope and think that I have taken due account of the obvious objections, by which I have myself in times past been influenced—Chap. xxxiii. This is one of the most difficult prophecies to date, because of the number of preliminary questions, critical and historical, which have to be settled. That in its present form it is Isaiah’s, cannot however be maintained without rashness, and the arguments are very strong for making it post-Exilic. I take it to be an imaginative reflexion of history, half poetic, half prophetic in style.—Chaps. xxxiv., xxxv., though placed in juxtaposition, have no very close connexion (cf. Prof. Graetz’s article in this REVIEW, Oct., 1891). They are however both certainly post-Exilic, and called forth, as Kuennen has remarked, by the inadequate

fulfilment of earlier prophecies.—Chap. xxxiv. is imitated in Jer. l., but as Jer. l. and li. are undoubtedly very late, this is no proof that chap. xxxiv. is a work of the early Persian period.—Chaps. xxxvi.—xxxix. Into the complicated question of the origin of this narrative I cannot here enter ; but the authenticity of the fine oracle, xxxvii. 22*b*—32, is beyond question ; we cannot, unfortunately, say as much of verses 33—35. There may also be a historical element in xxxvii. 6, 7, though the form may be doubtful. The “Psalm of Hezekiah” I long ago, quite independently of any modern critic, claimed for post-Exilic literature. It was of course introduced subsequently to the transference of the abridged narratives from 2 Kings xviii.—xx. With regard to the circumstantial prediction in xxxix. 6, 7, I am still of the same mind as in 1880. Nothing in Dillmann’s note seems to me to affect the main points urged in my commentary. The prediction is no more the genuine work of Isaiah than the words, “and thou shalt go even to Babylon” (Mic. iv. 10), are the work of his contemporary Micah. There is probably a basis of tradition to the narrative (2 Kings xx. 12—19), and it is *à priori* certain that Isaiah was opposed to a Babylonian alliance ; but there is no good reason for supposing that we have any even imperfect record of a prophecy of Isaiah on the occasion. Let me add that our undoubtedly authentic record of the thoughts of Isaiah during the predominance of the untheocratic party holds out the prospect of a sure and prompt punishment, not for the royal family, but for the politicians : “Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem,” &c. (xxviii. 14).

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